

Cracks in the Concrete

ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN NEWS AND COMMENTARY

University police shoot student in the face

In Gainesville, Florida on Tuesday, March 2nd, when an international graduate student at the University of Florida, Kofi Adu-Brempong was having a nervous breakdown in his apartment, a concerned neighbor made the well-intentioned but unfortunate mistake of calling 9-1-1. The University of Florida Police Department apparently didn't think to call in mental health workers. Instead, they broke down his door, shot him with a taser twice, three times with bean bag shotgun shells, and once in the face with an M-4 (a combat-grade assault rifle.) They managed to carefully consider their maniacal assault and carry it out in... a whole 30 seconds after having broken down his door.

Kofi Adu-Brempong is now hospitalized and in critical condition. As seems to be a trend in these cases, the police did not apologize for the near-fatal attack. Armed thugs must justify their behavior by blaming their victims, and accordingly, Adu-Brempong is facing criminal charges for "possessing a weapon." What kind of weapon, you ask? An assault rifle like the one he was shot in the face with? A taser like the one he was shocked with twice?

Nope. His cane that he uses to walk with due to his polio. If you are to learn anything from this instance, or many others similar, let it be that *calling the police is never a good idea, and is in fact a very dangerous idea.*

Sobriety checkpoints rake in cash for the state

According to a recent investigation by the Investigative Reporting Program at UC Berkeley, sobriety checkpoints in California amount to little more than huge profit centers for police and the state at the expense of unlicensed motorists, minority drivers, illegal immigrants and, once in a blue moon, an actual drunk driver. In 2009 alone, impounds at checkpoints generated an estimated \$40 million in towing fees and police fines- revenue that cities divide with towing firms. In addition, police have received \$30 million in overtime pay for DUI crackdowns.

Among the findings of this investigation include:

- Sobriety checkpoints frequently screen traffic within, or near, Hispanic neighborhoods. Cities where Hispanics are a majority of the population are seizing cars at three times the rate of cities with small minority

populations. In South Gate, a Los Angeles County city where Hispanics make up 92 percent of the population, police confiscated an average of 86 vehicles per operation last fiscal year.

- The seizures appear to defy a 2005 federal appellate court ruling that determined police cannot impound cars solely because the driver is unlicensed. In fact, police across the state have ratcheted up vehicle seizures. Last year, officers impounded more than 24,000 cars and trucks at checkpoints. That total is roughly seven times higher than the 3,200 drunken driving arrests at roadway operations. The percentage of vehicle seizures has increased 53 percent compared to 2007.

- Departments frequently overstaff checkpoints with officers, all earning overtime. The Moreno Valley Police Department in Riverside County averaged 38 officers at each operation last year, six times more than federal guidelines say is required. Nearly 50 other local police and sheriff's departments averaged 20 or more officers per checkpoint—operations that averaged three DUI arrests a night

These findings aside, it should be noted that under any circumstance, in any area, for any reason, checkpoints

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As you can see, Cracks in the Concrete has taken on a new format. Publishing Cracks in the Concrete as a shorter and more news-oriented journal will allow me the ability to publish more frequently. Scaling down this project allows the time and energy to keep it going and publish more than just a few times a year. I won't begin a regular publishing schedule until later this year, but I wanted to get one issue out there before heading out to travel, tour and whatever else I got planned this summer.

Another factor in this decision was that, after looking back at past issues of Cracks, I realize that a very little amount of material before issue #10 or #11 represents where I am at today. It feels like a good time for me to allow that particular fire to die down and douse my efforts into a slightly different flame. I started putting out Cracks in high school, ninth grade to be exact, a little over six years ago. I'm much more grounded in my outlook and intentions now than I was then. Aside from sustaining my energy to publish and my ability to do it more frequently, the idea of starting something new that more accurately reflects what I want this journal to be about was very encouraging.

Please feel free to write,

-Luke Romano

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What we are about:

Anti-authoritarianism: Criticism of, and resistance to, all forms of authority, hierarchy, domination and oppression. This includes statism, capitalism, religion, militarism, etc. along with all types of social oppression such as classism, racism and sexism.

Anarchism: The theory and practice of organizing society along the lines of mutual aid, cooperation and free association. The theory that all forms of government and authoritarianism rest on threats, coercion and violence, and are therefore harmful to all living things, as well as unnecessary.

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are an intrusion on personal freedom, if even for the simple reason that you have to stop for police. They are a symptom of our ever-expanding police state, and they should not be viewed as anything but. The investigation goes on and on, including a lot of valuable information that may be more meaningful to some than others, but nowhere does it relate the idea that these checkpoints should not exist for any reason, and cannot be justified in any way.

Greek police kill another anarchist

One would assume that after non-stop insurrection in Greece since the murder of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos, cops in Greece would put a lid on their ultra-aggression. This is not the case, and, of course, will never be the case, as long as these thugs have a job.

On Wednesday, March 10th, in the suburb of Dafni (South Athens) 35-year-old anarchist Lambros Foundas was shot and murdered by police. The cops claimed that he was a "terrorist," was shot while trying to steal a car, and that he was carrying firearms. One can only speculate regarding any truth behind their claims.

Canadian Forces base commander sexually assaults and murders women

This past fall and winter in Belleville, Ontario, the disappearances of two women had struck fear into local residents. In February, Colonel Russell Williams, 46, commander of 8 Wing Trenton, was arrested and charged with the deaths of Jessica Lloyd, 27, and Marie-France Comeau, 37, along with two home invasions. Comeau, a military flight attendant based in Trenton, was found dead in her home on November 25th of last year.

Lloyd, who worked at Tri-Board Student Transportation Services in Napanee, Ont., was found dead in a secluded area near Tweed, Ontario on January 28th of this year.

There are a number of unsolved murder cases in communities where Williams has previously lived as well, all of which are now under investigation. One of these cases, in Glace Bay, N.S. involves the sexual assault and stabbing of Kathleen MacVicar whose murdered body was found at CFB Trenton.

You've probably heard stories like this before; soldiers or others involved with military service behaving in psychotically violent ways. Torture. Rape. You name it. The story is presented in a manner that ignores the link between militarism (good violence) and the non-military related violence (bad violence) of servicemen and women. A manner in which your concerns are eased as you are assured that this was an isolated incident, justice will be done, and the military is free from it's bad apples once again.

Take note, though, of this case. Don't forget it. You'll hear more of these stories; we've covered a ton in the past. It isn't too hard to connect the dots between torture, murder, rape, violence against women, child abuse, etc. and militarism. Soldiers are *hired and trained killers*. Why should it surprise anyone that *hired killers* wind up abusing and even murdering those in their own community, and in many cases, in their own family? It shouldn't. These are the types of people involved with the military.

It's always worth repeating: Militarism breeds inhumanity, brutality and uncontrolled violence. There is no type of training that will make this not so. There are no bad apples within the military. The military in its entirety is a rotten organization. That means the Canadian military, the US and every other state's military. If we want to

see an end to this insanity, it all has to go.

New Orleans Police kill two, and then cover it up

In more evidence that Hurricane Katrina was largely a disaster of police statism, of racist and classist culture along with being a natural one, a second former police officer has pleaded guilty to the covering up of the police killing two unarmed African Americans during the aftermath of Katrina. The victims, Ronald Madison, 42, and James Brissette, 19, were crossing the Danziger Bridge in search of food. Madison, who was mentally ill, was shot seven times, five in the back.

On March 11th, former New Orleans police officer Jeffrey Lehrmann admitted to knowing of the cover-up. The previous month, a retired police lieutenant who oversaw the investigation admitted to a conspiracy charge in fabricating witness statements, falsifying incident reports, and planting a gun at the crime scene. Police now say the officers also held a secret meeting to coordinate their fabricated accounts of the shooting.

In sentencing Lehrmann, US District Judge Lance Africk stated, "I have neither imagined or heard of more despicable conduct by law enforcement officers." Judge Lance should probably read *Cracks in the Concrete*, or check out any other media source that doesn't whitewash daily the abuse and violence perpetrated by police.

Humans driving massive extinction faster than species can evolve

A Tuesday, March 9th report in *The Guardian* suggests that for the first time since the disappearance of the dinosaurs, humans are driving extinction faster than species can evolve. Conservation experts have

already agreed that the planet is in the grip of the "sixth great extinction" of species, driven by the destruction of natural habitats, climate change, hunting, and the spread of alien predators and disease.

Until now, it has been hoped that the rate at which new species were evolving could keep pace with the loss of diversity of life. Simon Stuart, chair of the Species Survival Commission for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the body that officially declares species threatened and extinct, said that point has now "almost certainly" been crossed.

Stuart stated, "Measuring the rate at which new species evolve is difficult, but there's no question that the current extinction rates are faster than that; I think it's inevitable."

Now that experts and other important sounding people agree on some pretty obvious notions that some cultures have been declaring for centuries, that total human domination over nature is really fucking things up, maybe humanity will seriously start to analyze and evaluate the way we relate to other living things on this planet.

It shouldn't take science to know that the indiscriminant killing of all life is dangerous, but either way, science is on our side.

Troops kill two pregnant women and teenage girl in Afghanistan

Here we have some more news regarding the imperialist and colonial occupation of Afghanistan by US armed forces. Feel the hope of change President Obama fed down the throats of affected Americans whither away with every line.

The Times of London has reported that in the Paktia province of Afghanistan early last March, US and Afghan gunmen killed two pregnant mothers, a teenage girl and two local officials during a nighttime raid. The raid occurred two weeks after the commander of US and NATO forces

in Afghanistan issued new guidelines designed to limit the use of night raids.

Survivors of the raid said that US and NATO forces attempted to cover up the killings. They did this by claiming that the three women had been discovered bound and gagged, apparently killed execution style. *The Times* reports the two Afghan men were shot dead while trying to proclaim their innocence. The women were hit by the same volley of fire while crouching in a hallway.

One of the mothers killed had ten children, the other had six children. The families of the victims have been offered \$2,000 in compensation.

When it comes to aggressive and tragic acts of violence, you can count on the US military and associated organizations to try covering it up first. It's not always easy, as seemed to be the case with this incident. Fortunately, once in a while, they are exposed for the lying murderers that they are. Support the troops? No thanks.

More sex abuse scandals involving, you guessed it, churches

Various patterns of abuse seem to routinely center themselves around different kinds of authoritarian institutions. Churches, and more specifically, Catholic churches, are often associated with child molestation and sexual abuse. This is most likely due to the fact that lots of kids are molested and sexually abused in churches. Generally, by power-obsessed priests who are sick with control and sexual aggression.

More than 100 reports of abuse at Catholic institutions in Germany have emerged in recent weeks. One German priest, Father Hullermann, was allowed by Church officials, including the future pope, to remain in the church since 1980 when he was first accused of sexually abusing young boys. Even after 1986

when Hullermann was convicted of sexually abusing young boys, he was allowed to remain in the church. It wasn't until March of this year that Hullermann's place in the church has been "suspended," after breaching a ban on working with children.

Meanwhile in Ireland, a priest named Brendan Smyth has been raping and molesting children for over thirty-five years. Cardinal Sean Brady, the head of the Catholic Church in Ireland, knew of this priests routine behavior but, instead of reporting it, asked the children involved to take a vow of silence. That's right, the *head of the Catholic Church in Ireland* met with a group of children abused by priest Brendan Smyth in 1975 and *asked them to take a vow of silence*. Pressure is currently mounting for the resignation of Sean Brady. Hopefully, with the lives of children that have been abused and scarred in mind, there are some who have a more drastic response in mind beyond the Cardinal's resignation.

Here in the states, one can remember some pretty large-scale church-related sex abuse cases of our own not too long ago.

As an inherently authoritarian institution, the Catholic Church will always be an inherently abusive institution. There is no way around these issues besides a total abolition of such institutions. Catholicism, Christianity, and all major religions for that matter, are built on this kind of abuse. They are built on twisted and repressive ideas around sexuality, oppressive gender and power dynamics along with deep corruption that seems to have reached a sad state of normalcy.

Like all organizations built on authoritarian practice and ideology, whether governmental or religious, the problem won't go away without addressing the root cause. Which, as scary as it is, means confronting their very existence in the first place.

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on patriotism

Sean Swain

Some famous dead guy [*Samuel Johnson -ed.*] once said that patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels. What I think he meant was, the low-down cowards who run the whole, rotten system pull our strings and get us to march along with their sinister program by appealing to our love of country if they can't fool us with any of their other parlor tricks and platitudes. It's the tactic of the obscenely rich control-freaks to keep us pointing rifles in the direction that makes them the most money, taking advantage of our naïve willingness to bleed cheaply. Patriotism is a pile of lies told so often, a program engrained so deeply, that as adults we don't even harbor thoughts of stringing up the bosses, priests, and politicians who wave the flags, plan the wars, and crack the whips.

Patriotism is a kind of chauvinism, a myth of national superiority spoon-fed to impressionable children, a nationalized pride that "our dad can beat up your dad," a distorted proclamation that we are better than others and God is on our side. It justifies whatever barbarity we inflict upon others and validates our prosecution of war crimes for whatever others may do to us... whether we had it coming or not.

Patriotism is a fine and moving speech delivered by a privileged and educated pitch-man standing on a soap box made of the bones of slaves and tribal chiefs. It is a joke in poor taste whispered conspiratorially in country clubs of the ruling elite, "A Black man, a Latino, and piece of white trash went to war..." and the joke always ends with three flag-draped coffins, a huddle of fatherless, poor kids, and the wealthy old buzzards laughing so hard they drop their beloved money bags and piss themselves.

Patriotism is the scale to weigh our individual and collective ignorance, the yard-stick by which to measure the depth of our loyalty to our class enemy, the oppressor who compels us to pick his cotton. It is likewise the measure of our disloyalty to ourselves.

Freedom and patriotism are incompatible. We cannot celebrate liberty by hugging our chains and the profiteers who shackled us, waving flags manufactured in Wal-Mart sponsored sweatshops. Patriotism will continue to butcher true freedom until its blood-weary victims unite in their renunciation of allegiances to all national plantations in the immortal words of Nat Turner, "A fire in the master's house is set..."

Sean Swain is an anarchist prisoner held captive by the state of Ohio since 1991. To read more of his writings and learn more about him, you can check out: www.seanswain.org

Regional projects and struggles to check out...

Survival Solidarity:
www.survivalsolidarity.wordpress.com

Phoenix Class War Council:
www.firesneverextinguished.blogspot.com

O'dham Solidarity Across Borders:
www.oodhamsolidarity.blogspot.com

Black Mesa Indigenous Support:
www.blackmesais.org

Chaparral Respects No Borders:
www.chaparralrespectsnoborders.blogspot.com

Root Force:
www.rootforce.org

The Earth First! Journal:
www.earthfirstjournal.org

Peace Supplies:
www.peacesupplies.org

Save the Gloo Factory:
www.savethegloofactory.org

Save the Peaks:
www.savethepeaks.org

Dry River Infoshop (Tucson):
www.dryriver.org

The Catalyst Infoshop (Prescott):
www.catalystinfoshop.net

Taala Hooghan Infoshop (Flagstaff):
www.taalahooghan.org

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Undercover cops beat, choke and tear dreadlocks from 18- year-old's head

Around 11 p.m. on January 12th in Pittsburgh, PA, 18-year-old Jordan Miles was brutally attacked by three undercover police officers. Jordan, a viola player and honors student at the prestigious Creative & Performing Arts School (CAPA), was walking to his grandmother's home from his mother's when the attack occurred.

According to the police report, Miles was standing against a building "as if he was trying to avoid being seen." The police supposedly observed something under his jacket that they thought to be a gun, but wound up, according to their report, to be a bottle of Mountain Dew. Miles, however, claims that he was not even in possession of a Mountain Dew bottle, which is a beverage that he seldom drinks.

As Miles was walking he noticed a white car pull up with three men inside. They jumped out of the vehicle and began shouting, "Where's the money?" "Where's the gun?" "Where's the drugs?" Miles assumed he was about to be robbed and turned to run away towards his mother's house, when he slipped and fell on the icy sidewalk.

Miles describes the attack, "That's when they starting beating me, punching, kicking me, choking me." Fifteen minutes later uniformed officers arrived on the scene in a police van. It wasn't until then that Miles realized he was being arrested. The attackers had yet to identify themselves as police. Up until the police van showed up, Miles assumed he was being abducted.

Photos taken and released by Jordan's mother, Terez Miles, show Jordan's face covered with bruises, his right eye swollen shut and a bald spot where officers tore dreadlocks from his head. Jordan was treated

twice at West Penn Hospital for his injuries.

This is clearly a case of racial profiling. Jordan Miles is black, all attacking officers were white. This is clearly a case of systemic police brutality. Jordan's offense- walking while black- will, most likely, never become formerly acknowledged. Nation-wide attention to this case is increasing, however, and the FBI opened up a fact-finding investigation to determine if Jordan's civil rights were violated. Which, when viewed objectively, is horribly insulting that an FBI investigation must be opened up to determine such an obvious fact.

The three attacking piles of filth have been identified as Richard Ewing, David Sisak, and Michael Saldutte. All three failed to appear at Miles' Jan. 18th hearing on charges of resisting arrest and aggravated assault. They are still policing the streets of Pittsburgh as I write this article.

How many instances of similar brutality will it take to convince the average person that police are a threat to the functioning of a healthy community? How many beatings, assaults and occurrences of un-restrained violence do we need to recognize the police for the blight on society that they are? They do not keep us safe. They do not protect or serve anything but the state that hires them. All governments, all police and all prisons are a twisted and sick vision of social order. It all must be taken down to end this violence.

Man crashes plane into IRS building in Austin, TX

On the morning of Thursday, February 19th a man by the name of Joe Stack, 53, crashed his small private aircraft into an office of the Internal Revenue Service in Austin, Texas. Initially, many feared the attack to be connected to a terrorist organization. Later in the day, it was revealed that the crash had been

carried out by computer engineer Joe Stack, talented aspiring musician, described as a generally easygoing guy with a grudge against the tax authorities. Stack died in the crash along with two others, whom the authorities will not discuss the identities of.

Stack left behind a relatively rational letter explaining the reasons for his attack, defying the typical portrait of the terrorist driven mad by ideology or religion. His letter reflects frustration and rage with the myths of the "American Dream" and the poverty enforced upon working people nation-wide, along with a lot of personal history.

In the opening to his letter Stack asks, "Why is it that a handful of thugs and plunderers can commit unthinkable atrocities (in the case of the GM executives, for scores of years) and when it's time for their gravy train to crash under the weight of their gluttony and overwhelming stupidity, the force of the full federal government has no difficulty coming to their aid within days if not hours? Yet at the same time, the joke we call the American medical system, including the drug and insurance companies, are murdering tens of thousands of people a year and stealing from the corpses and victims they cripple, and this country's leaders don't see this as important as bailing out a few of their vile, rich cronies. Yet, the political "representatives" (thieves, liars, and self-serving scumbags is far more accurate) have endless time to sit around for year after year and debate the state of the "terrible health care problem". It's clear they see no crisis as long as the dead people don't get in the way of their corporate profits rolling in."

The statement is very long, seven type-written pages to be exact. Towards the end he writes, "I know I'm hardly the first one to decide I have had all I can stand. It has always been a myth that people have stopped

dying for their freedom in this country."

His letter ends with the conclusion that, "Sadly, though I spent my entire life trying to believe it wasn't so, violence not only is the answer, it is the only answer. The cruel joke is that the really big chunks of shit at the top have known this all along and have been laughing at and using this awareness against fools like me all along.

I saw it written once that the definition of insanity is repeating the same process over and over and expecting the outcome to suddenly be different. I am finally ready to stop this insanity. Well, Mr. Big Brother IRS man, let's try something different; take my pound of flesh and sleep well."

By covering this story, I do not want to come off as glorifying this act of violence. However, I cannot help but notice how many people can watch mainstream news and cheer on our invasions of others countries, ignoring the massive death of innocent they imply. If you are cheering on your government's wars and ignoring the mass death and poverty inflicted on the poor and working people of our own nation, the very tragedy Stack addresses, you have no excuse to condemn this act.

I only wish to weigh the violence imposed on all of us by state terror and capitol versus the few "isolated" acts of reaction. Whether you or I agree with actions such as Stack's, it must be acknowledged that they are actions of reaction, or self-defense. They are responses to oppression. It's up for you to decide how legitimate they are.

US changes name of Iraq War

Now that it is quite clear to the deluded voters who had faith in Obama that there will be no withdrawal of troops anytime soon, the administration has decided on, well, the second best thing. I guess. Changing the name of the Iraq War,

rather than ending it. No longer are we fighting under the banner of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Now it's Operation New Dawn.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates wrote that the name change marks "a strong signal that Operation Iraqi Freedom has ended and our forces are operating under a new mission." Now it's a New Dawn they are fighting for, whatever that means. They got the Freedom, I presume. What a sad, tasteless sense of humor these military guys have. What a callous, despicable soul politicians like Obama must have.

Interestingly enough, Operation New Dawn shares the same name as the November 2004 US attack on Fallujah that killed hundreds of Iraqi civilians and displaced thousands more. Doesn't sound very "New" to me.

"Experts" decide that police did not rape man smoking marijuana

On October 15th, 2008 Michael Mineo, 25, was caught smoking marijuana on his way to work outside of the Prospect Park subway station in Brooklyn. Mr. Mineo was already out on bail from a previous charge, so he swallowed the joint and ran into the subway station.

Inside the station, officers stopped him by striking him on the face, throwing him to the ground and repeatedly kicking him over and over. One of the officers, according to Mr. Mineo's testimony, shoved something "hard" into his buttocks three times. On the fourth, it pierced his boxer shorts and rectum.

"I felt it penetrating me," he said, "Something I had never felt before."

According to the testimony, one of the officers used a homophobic slur and stated, "You liked it."

After being arrested and in handcuffs, Mr. Mineo put a finger down his pants, scraped some blood

and showed it to the officers stating, "You know what you did."

He asked for them to call an ambulance to which an officer replied, "We can't do that."

Just last January, Mr. Mineo had a chance to relate his story in court. Various "experts" were used in defense of the accused police officers to make petty claims that contradict Mineo's testimony. For instance, as Dr. Frank T. Sconzo pointed out, such a hole in Mr. Mineo's boxer shorts would have produced an "L-shaped hole" rather than a "square one." The task for these "experts" are to portray Mr. Mineo as a liar whose injuries were self-inflicted, not tell the truth.

The three cops charged in this case are Officer Richard Kern, 26, who is charged with sexual abuse. Two more officers, Alex Cruz, 28, and Andrew Morales, 27, are charged with helping to cover up the assault. Will these violent maniacs be brought to justice? Probably not. No camera or cell phone caught the abuse as evidence. Our court system is good at blaming victims in any scenario possible, and fortunately for this fucked-up government, our culture backs this tendency up by socializing the population to ignore the cries of victims.

After a round of questions Mr. Mineo responded, "I get what you're saying, that I did that to myself. ...I don't want to be here right now. Do you know how embarrassing this is for me?"

Most will never know the humiliation of having to convince others of the abuse they've experienced, especially when the perpetrators are our ever-trusted boys in blue. We have to try, though, to locate these stories and bring them to light in a way that defies our culture and challenges the legitimacy of court processes.

Never trust the police, and always listen to victims.

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To the governing class the anarchists say: "Gentlemen, we ask no privilege, we propose no restriction; nor, on the other hand, will we permit it. We have no new shackles to propose, we seek emancipation from shackles. We ask no legislative sanction, for cooperation asks only for a free field and no favors; neither will we permit their interference. It asserts that in freedom of the social unit lies the freedom of the social state. It asserts that in freedom to possess and utilize soil lie social happiness and progress and the death of rent. It asserts that order can only exist where liberty prevails, and that progress leads and never follows order. It asserts, finally, that this emancipation will inaugurate liberty, equality, fraternity. That the existing industrial system has outgrown its usefulness, if it ever had any is I believe admitted by all who have given serious thought to this phase of social conditions.

The manifestations of discontent now looming upon every side show that society is conducted on wrong principles and that something has got to be done soon or the wage class will sink into a slavery worse than was the feudal serf. I say to the wage class: Think clearly and act quickly, or you are lost. Strike not for a few cents more an hour, because the price of living will be raised faster still, but strike for all you earn, be content with nothing less.

-Lucy Parsons (1853-1942)

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